

Good morning. It is a great joy to be able to meet with you this morning, at least via live stream. What we have before us in our text is an amazing passage of scripture. It is the Swiss Army knife of passages because there are so many ways that this passage informs us and blesses us as Christians. If this passage were food, it would be perfect in nutritional value, flavor, and texture. What I want to do before I get into the body of the text, is read it with a highlighter, and make some notes for you so that you can know where you can dig a little deeper in your own study.

1 Peter 1:10–12 (ESV): 10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,

11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

In **verse 10** the reader needs to consider the first 9 verses that Peter has presented. The reader will also find that prophecy was not always for the immediate audience. Peter mentions that it was a grace to be ours. Further, Peter is concerned to highlight that the prophets themselves were students of their prophetic word.

That naturally leads us to **verse 11**. What would they be students if it is their prophecy? Well, it was actually the Spirit of Christ speaking through them. These prophets searched and inquired carefully about these prophecies. Specifically, they were concerned with the content about the suffering of Christ. So here is the tension. They knew that the Spirit of Christ, that is the eternally begotten from the Father was speaking through them. They knew that God would visit His people and dwell with them, but they never understood how integrated that dwelling would be. So there was concern. How could God suffer, and suffering these ways? But it wasn't just the pain that drove their study. There was a subsequent glory to this salvation and to the Christ that they saw that awakened a need to dig more deeply.

**Verse 12** highlights the right for God to limit what each generation of believers will know upon this earth. Not only that, but the prophets at times served different generations. Now Peter says that the Holy Spirit worked through others for the sake of proclaiming the gospel. In doing this Peter connects the idea of Christ's Spirit being the Holy Spirit. He connects the idea of the gospel being in the O.T. And then Peter finishes by saying that these prophecies, and the consequent fulfillment in Christ is so amazing that angels have become student.

One more note: this passage is a passage that really helps us understand what is meant by inspiration of scripture. As Paul highlights in **2 Tim 3:16**, God breathed through these prophets to bring His word. He used many prophets. The message never changed. And finally, their prophecies were verifiable, at least in part, with the original audience as a proof of their veracity. This is very different from other religions which boast of few writers, and which loath any critical questions of their views.

But for now, let's look at how Peter builds this teaching of the importance of salvation, by considering what the prophets said. **.I. An Ancient Proclamation.** I think it would first be helpful in asking who exactly these prophets might have been? He says it as if the audience would have had some sense of the prophetic words concerning salvation.

Well, the quick answer is to say, the prophets are those in whom the Spirit of Christ resided, as we can see from **verse 11**. But I am afraid that that is a bit misleading for a couple of reasons. **One** is that the coming of Pentecost made the Spirit's indwelling presence upon God followers the bench mark experience. Paul basically says in his writing, no indwelling of the Holy Spirit means no salvation.

**Romans 8:9 (ESV):** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

So with such a simple definition we might be inclined to believe that we are talking about prophets during the time of the early church. That can't be true because the text makes clear that they were prophesying of a time to come. These have to be the prophets of the O.T. There we can see a score of passages that look forward to the sufferings of Christ. Jonah is set as an example of Christ's death and resurrection. Daniel talks about being sick after he saw visions of heaven and the time of the end, and he was told that those visions were for another time. He certainly bears the flavor of this passage. But perhaps the clearest voices pertaining to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow are found in Isaiah.

**Isaiah 53:4-6 (ESV)**

**"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned each not to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."**

Jesus Christ took our sins, our punishment, our turmoil, so that we could experience the peace of God.

So **Isaiah 54** begins like this,

**"Sing, o barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married."**

**Isaiah 55** invites the thirsty and hungry to partake of this provision.

**Isaiah 56** talks about salvation for the gentiles.

**Isaiah 61** underscores the coming of Jesus and His task.

**Isaiah 62** looks forward to the consummation of salvation until finally Isaiah talks about a new heaven and a new earth in **chapter 66**.

What we cling to as Christians that helps us during times of trial, what we grasp, **are the familiar chord of the promises of God that have been set forth in ancient times. They are as old as the earth.** In fact, in **1:20** tells us that Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the earth. The truth of the gospel to which we cling predated the foundations of the world as they are only seen in our precious savior Christ.

So, my friends, if you are in Christ, if in you dwells the Spirit of the Christ, you are in step with the centuries of faithful followers of God. **Christianity is not the religion of the west. The Christianity that was coming in Christ was the hope of many in the Ancient Near East, and its roots are found in the very beginnings of creation. This is the message for the world, and it has never changed.** Will you rest in the enduring promises of God in the midst of your trials, and in the midst of global pandemics and economic uncertainties? His prophetic words were fulfilled in the face of the rising and falling of dynasties and civilizations. If you are in Christ you are not resting your hope on silly myths. Nor are you believing in pop up religion.

Peter focuses our attention on the ancient proclamation of the prophets and then focuses on the consequence of such a proclamation. **.II. The consequence of such a proclamation.** The first consequence was the inspiration of study. It is a **proclamation worth studying.** These men searched and inquired carefully. In other words, their study was not haphazard. It wasn't casual. It was urgent. It was necessary. It was exact. My friends, if these prophets could be so moved with the words of God, should not we also be so compelled? Dear friends, every one of us should be compelled to be urgent in our desire to know the words that God has spoken. We all must confess a casualness that haunts our Christian walk. We all have to confess the husband ears when it comes to God's truth. What are the husband ears? Oh, every married woman has encountered it. It's when their husbands glass over with a face of true interest, but there is nothing registering in the mind. Ever been there? Kids have the same problem. One of the common parent quotes that seems as ubiquitous as water is, "listen to **my** voice. When I am speaking, you listen." We must all confess that we have done this to the word, but the beauty is that we don't have to stay there. Start digging deeply now. Ask God to give you a heart that desires Him, and a desire to want to know Him. And then study the **word.** Don't get bogged down in reading someone's Cliff Notes, or Idiots Guide to the Bible. Dig in to God's word yourself and mine the treasures of grace and peace that God wants to give all those who would take their pick and axe to His mines of glory.

Notice that not only is God speaking through these people, that is the essence of our understanding of scripture, but that what God says is glorious, it is freeing, it is redeeming. Jesus Christ has wiped away the sins of all who repent and believe in Him for salvation from their sins. We are free from the grip of death, and are free from being under the wrath of God for sin. Christ has taken this in His suffering. He has satisfied the prophecies of coming to this earth humbly and meekly. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on an animal of peace for the sole purpose of being ripped to shreds and hung on a cross, all so that we might have His peace and He might reveal God's glory. This is a proclamation worth studying.

**Second**, this is also a **proclamation that serves others**. These prophets were looking at the information that God had given them regarding the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and His suffering. They were looking at the state of their audience and wondering how their experiences tied into all these things. God's response for their searches was not to rebuke them, but to underscore to them that they were serving people who would come after them.

Tell me, my friend, what is church to you? It is a place where we can worship our Lord. It is a place where we can grow in our faith. It is a place where the gospel can be reached. But it is also the body of Christ, the visible representation of those who are being redeemed into God's amazing plan, and until Christ returns, we are the stewards of this grace. **If you are part of Westwood Church, how invested are you in making Westwood a place worth handing down, a place in good order to give to another generation?** These prophets gave their lives for speaking the words God gave them in order that we might be served with this amazing good news of Christ. So what will you hand down? Will you hand down a casualness to seeking God? Will you hand down a church can't compete with sports and programs? My kid is only young once, after all! I am not saying that it is a sin to develop your kids and give them as many life experiences and God allows. I am urging you to keep that within proper priority. Please tell me. Of all the sacrifices to plug your kids into extra curricular activity, how many of those will actually give them hope if you, or they, are stuck on a ventilator and struggling for life? Are you really thinking, I should have pitched a curve ball; I should have shot a three point shot; I should have hit that note more clearly, we should have had one more practice? No, my experience at hospital beds when people are flirting with death is that even the most pagan want a prayer. The clutter of life doesn't matter. You need the essentials. What are you handing down? **Is church an optional event, or the life blood of your soul?**

I think it would be helpful to wrestle with what a church worth handing down should look like. What is a church worth handing down? Well, first, if we are to stay in keeping with the text, it is a church that is given to the sober, and urgent study of God's word. The proclamation of God's word brought hope, conviction, redemption, and glory, all because God can be known by learning what He reveals about Himself. So a church that is concerned with focused upon the proclamation of the Word of God is one who is also submitted to make the church look like Christ, its savior. Jesus was not concern in making everything look the same, but of making everything holy. Every nation, tongue, and tribe is represented in the role call of the redeemed. Their ethnic identities are not lost in heaven. Redemption is about removing what distorts the beauty of what God wants to display through such a ethnically diverse group of people. Redemption is about making us holy and displaying that holiness in the voices God has created in us. Are we really committed to that kind of church?

If we take all this in context of what we have been saying from the beginning of our series, then this question should drive our commitment, are we moved enough by God's grace to commit to being gracious stewards of the gospel of truth. To be a good steward we must know it. To be a good steward, we must advance it. To be a good steward, we must live it. And all of this at whatever cost it would please the Lord for us to pay. After all, we serve the Christ, the Son of the living God! Amen.